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THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME
ADAPTED FROM THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY VICTOR HUGO
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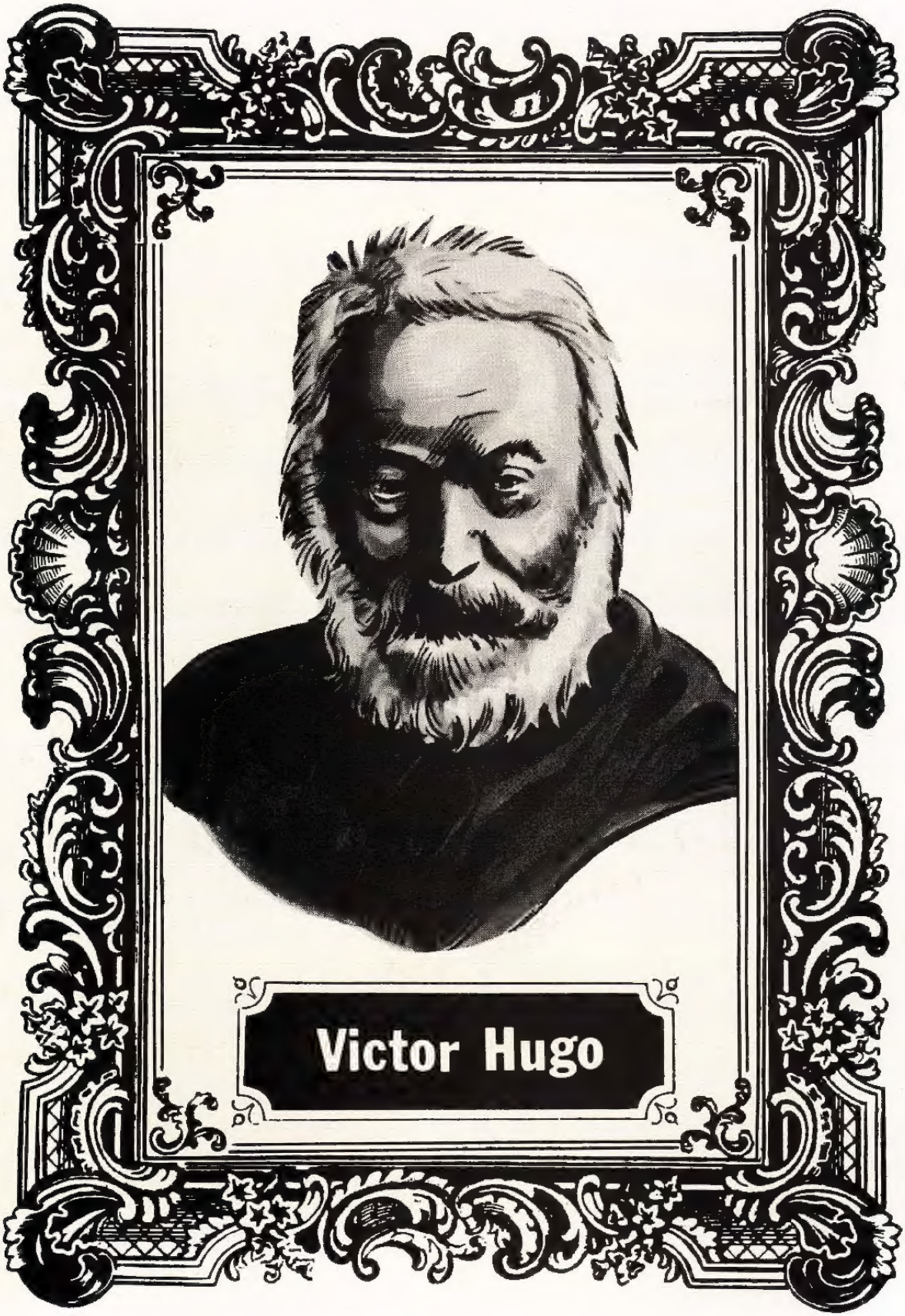
52 FULL PGS. NO ADS


Victor Hugo

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

Victor Hugo
The Hunchback of Notre Dame

Adapted by
NAUNERLE FARR

Illustrated by
JON LO FAMIA

a
VINCENT FAGO
production

A great ringing of bells greeted the double holiday of January 6, 1482. Epiphany and the Festival of Fools. In Paris it was to be celebrated with fireworks in the Place de Greve, and a play performed at the Palace of Justice.

Epiphany is the feast of the visit of Kings to the Christ child.

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At noon there was to be a play and also the arrival of the high officials. But both were late, and the crowd became restless. Students, soldiers, tradesmen, beggars, the crowd filled the Palace of Justice.

The play, or we'll hang the Palace Bailiff*!

The play! The play!

A frightened actor dressed as a god appeared.

As soon as the Cardinal** arrives, we shall begin.

The crowd booed angrily. A tall, fair young man stepped forward.

Start now!

Down with Jupiter!

Down with the Cardinal!

Jupiter—begin at once! I will explain to the Cardinal.

* an officer of the court

** a high official of the Catholic church

As the play began, a girl in the front row spoke to the young man.

The play went on The audience listened patiently. All at once the door of the balcony was thrown open.

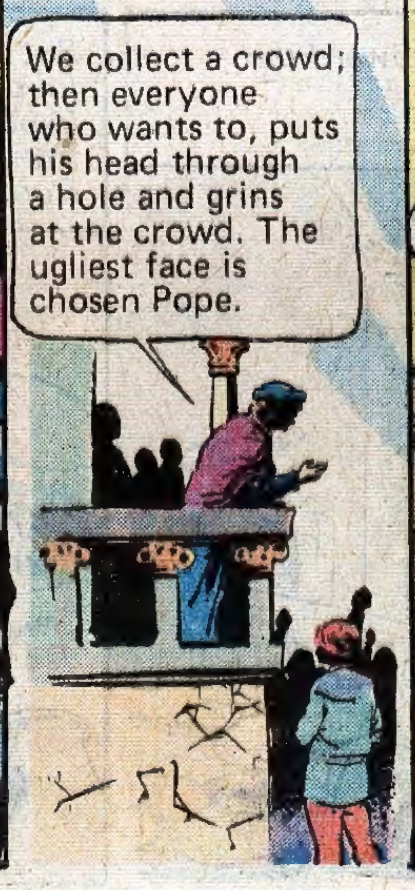
Every head turned toward the Cardinal.

But the Cardinal was followed by a long line of famous guests: ambassadors from Austria, high officials from Flanders, and finally. . . .*

* representatives from foreign countries

The crowd found the noble guests more interesting than the play. Every eye was on the balcony. Gringoire lost hope.

At last everyone had arrived. The actors went on. Suddenly Master Coppenole rose from his seat.


We collect a crowd; then everyone who wants to, puts his head through a hole and grins at the crowd. The ugliest face is chosen Pope.

Quickly all was made ready. A little chapel opposite the stage was chosen for the scene.

The face making began. Each face was welcomed by shouts and stamping from the crowd.

Then came the thunder of applause. The Pope of Fools was elected!

Only when he was brought out in front of the curtain was it discovered that the face was his real face.
It is Quasimodo, the bell ringer!
It is the hunchback of Notre Dame!

A paper crown and a poor robe were placed on him and he was carried on the shoulders of twelve men.

There was a look of hateful pride on his face as he saw beneath him, the heads of those straight, well-shaped men.

The parade moved off through the streets. Gringoire felt a hope of finishing his play.

Unluckily, the crowd rushed after them. In a moment the great hall was nearly empty.

Those who were left in the hall ran to the windows.

All at once a shout came from a young man in a window.

people who live in Paris

It was dark and cold when Gringoire left the Palace, and he had no place to go. He owed six months rent on his room. He had hoped to pay up with the money from the play—but the play had been a failure! Very well! He would join the Fools at their festival, warm at their fire, perhaps share their feast.

In the Place de Greve, a large crowd was gathered around the fire. Between the crowd and the fire, a young woman was dancing.

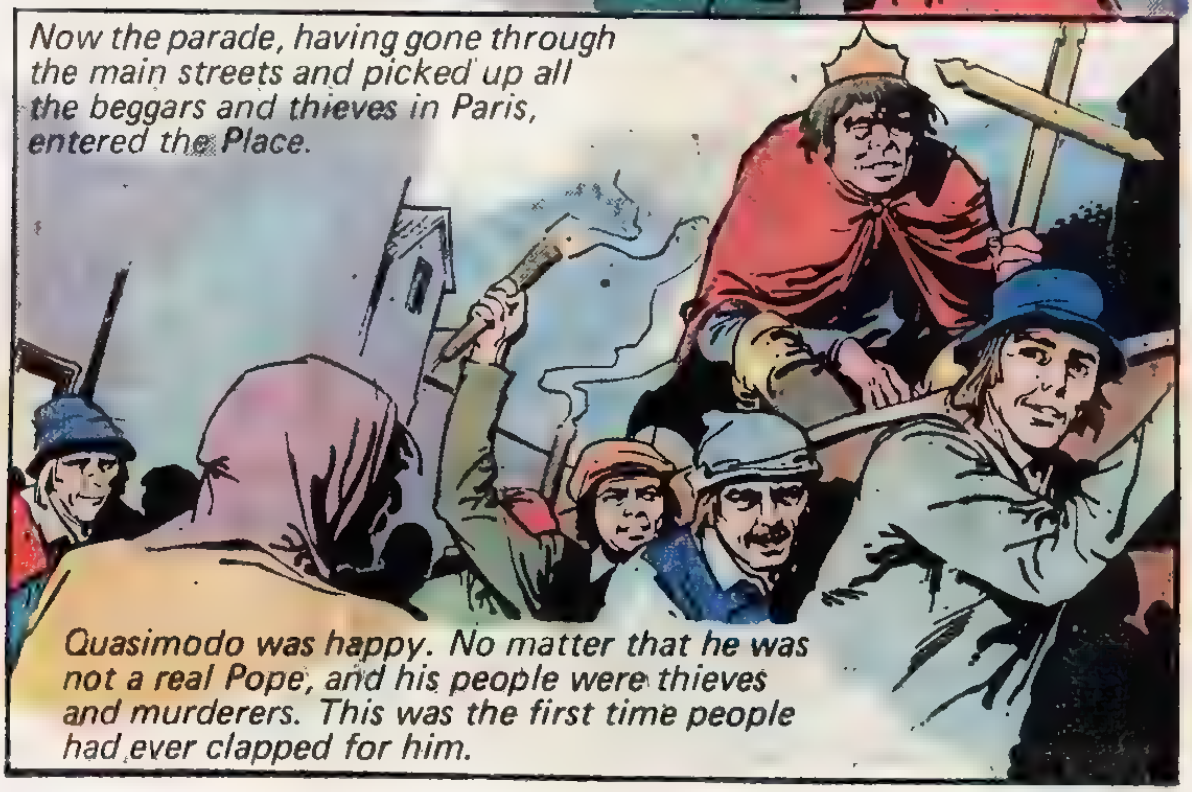
Then she turned to a little white goat.

With his little hoof the goat struck the tambourine once for the month. Then he told the day and the hour.*

* a musical instrument with a top like that of a drum

One face in the crowd stared at the dancer harder than any other—a bald man with deep-set eyes. Now he spoke.
There is witchcraft at the bottom of this!

The girl shuddered and turned away. Applause drowned the gloomy words as she began to collect money.
The devil! My pocket's empty.


Now the parade, having gone through the main streets and picked up all the beggars and thieves in Paris, entered the Place.
Quasimodo was happy. No matter that he was not a real Pope, and his people were thieves and murderers. This was the first time people had ever clapped for him.

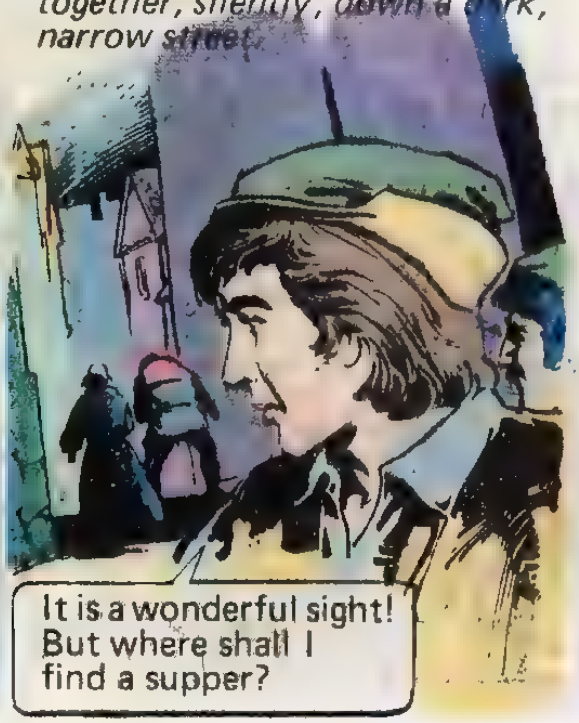
Suddenly the bald-headed man rushed toward Quasimodo.

He snatched the golden staff from Quasimodo's hands.

The hunchback leaped down. The crowd feared he would tear the monk to pieces.

Instead, Quasimodo dropped to his knees, and remained so as the priest removed the robe and crown and broke the staff.

Then the priest made a sign to Quasimodo, and they went together, silently, down a dark, narrow street.

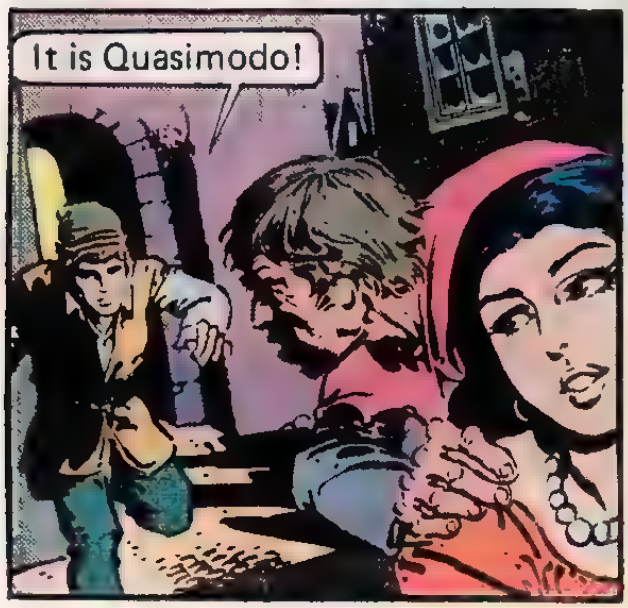


* head of a large church in Paris

Gringoire decided to follow the gypsy girl.

The streets became darker and more empty.

Shouting for a guard Gringoire ran forward. One of the men turned upon him.



Quasimodo struck him once and knocked him down.

Then the hunchback picked up the girl and carried her off. His friend followed.

Suddenly a soldier on horseback came dashing out of the next street, his sword in hand.

He snatched the girl from Quasimodo. Other soldiers held the hunchback, whose friend ran away.

The gypsy turned and looked at the officer.

She thanked the officer, slid to the ground, and ran off.

Gringoire, hurt by his fall, finally came to his senses.

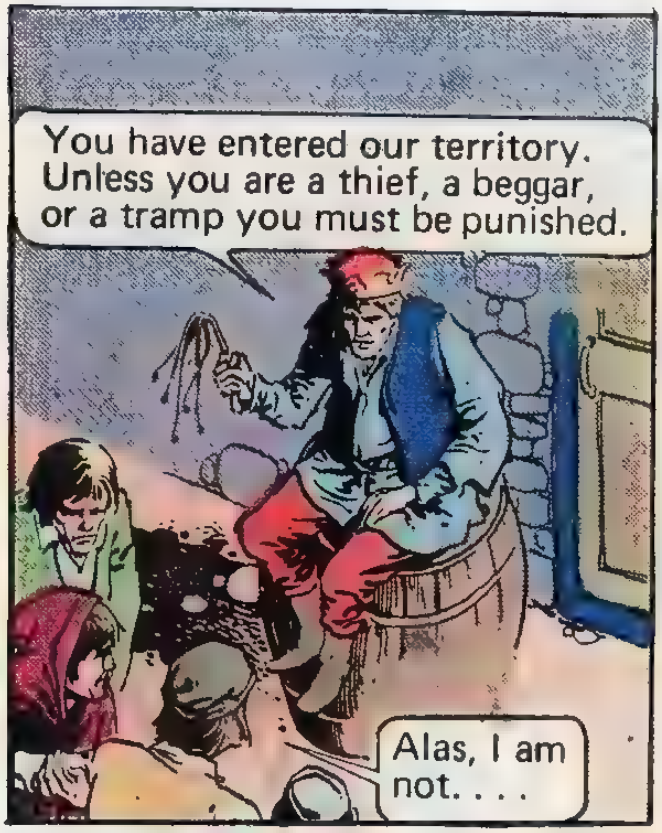
Soon, in the muddy lane, he found himself with strange people.

They came to an open square. One cripple threw down his crutches. The other rose from his cart. The blind man stared Gringoire in the face.

He was in the terrible Cour des Miracles where no honest man dared come; the home of crooks and beggars who faked their injuries.

The area was filled with men, women, children, dogs. The three beggars grabbed Gringoire.

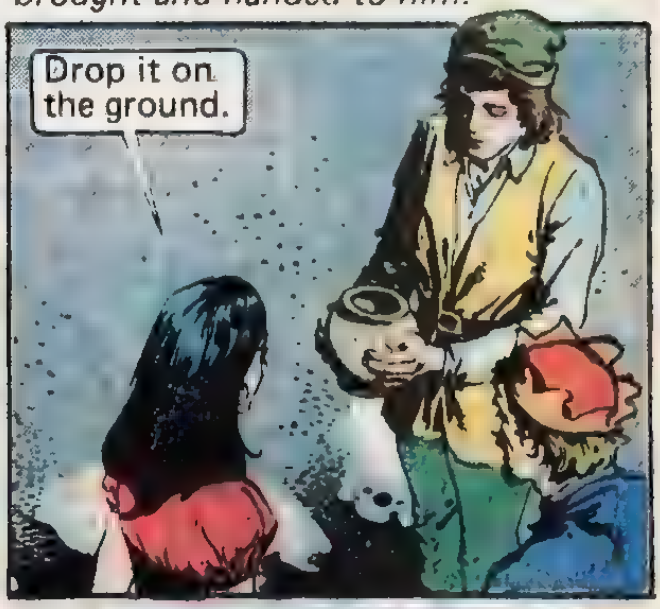
On a barrel near the fire sat the King—



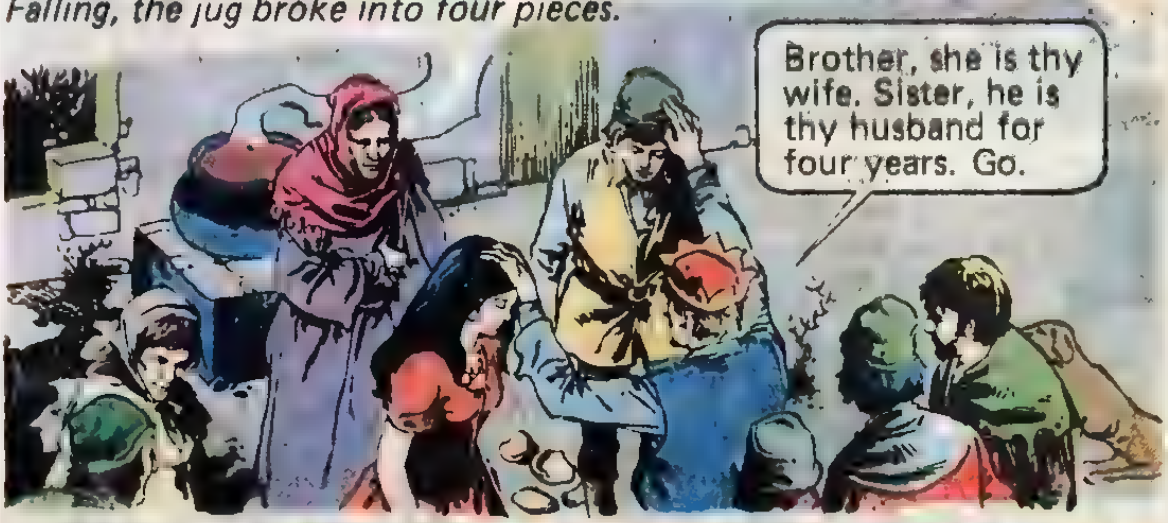
They put a crossbar across two poles and hung a rope from it. Gringoire was put on a stool, the rope around his neck.

Gringoire felt that he was in a dream.

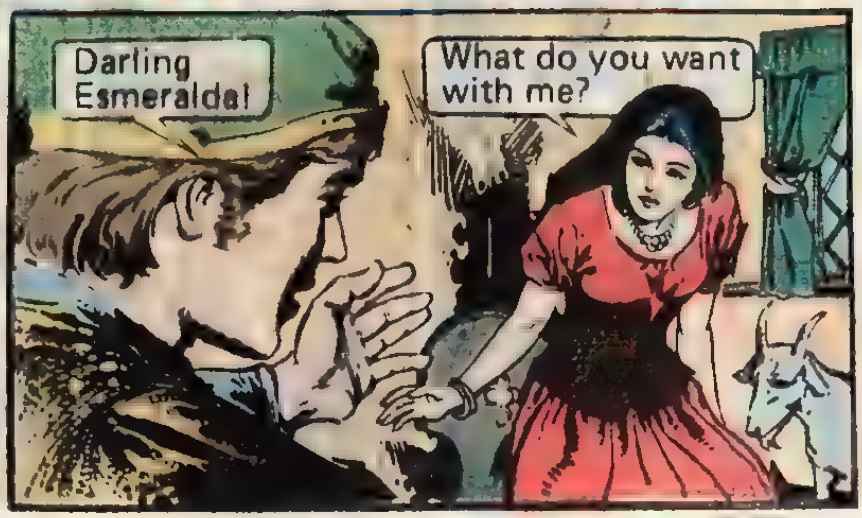
The noose was removed. Gringoire was lifted from the stool. A clay jug was brought and handed to him.



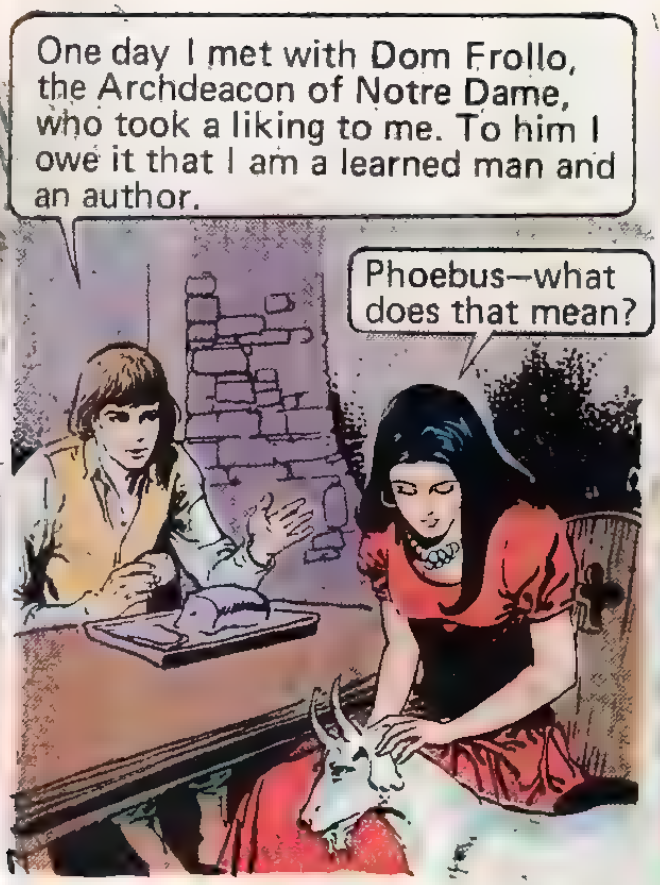
Falling, the jug broke into four pieces.

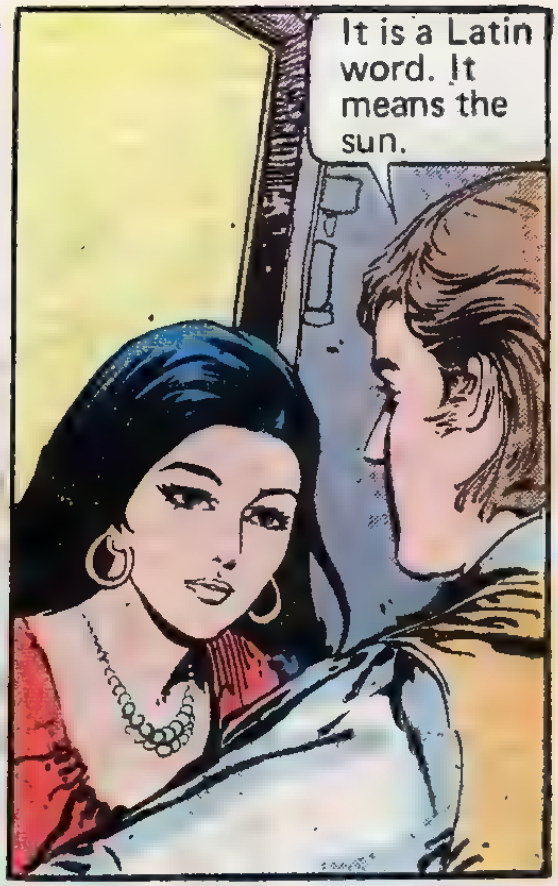


In a few moments the poet found himself in a snug, warm room, the husband of this beautiful young woman. He came to her.

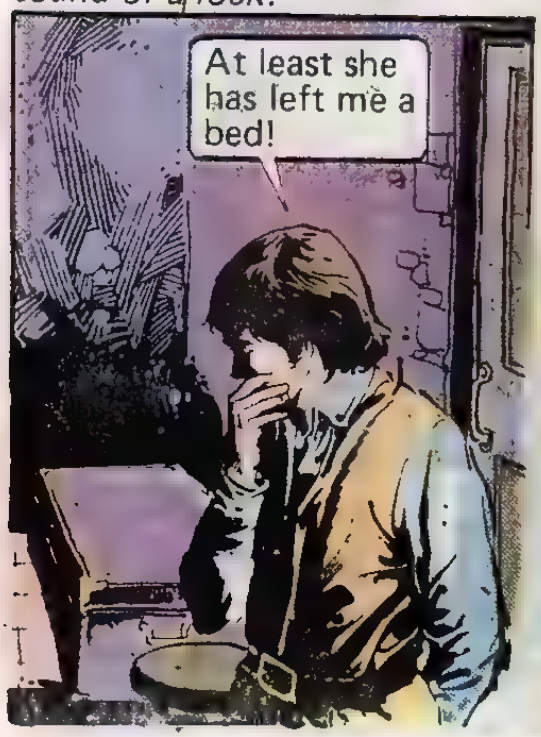


Suddenly she stooped and raised herself again, a little daggar in her hand. The little white goat faced Gringoire with two sharp horns.


One day I met with Dom Frollo, the Archdeacon of Notre Dame, who took a liking to me. To him I owe it that I am a learned man and an author.
Phoebus—what does that mean?



Suddenly the girl and the goat slipped through the door of the next room. Gringoire heard the sound of a lock.

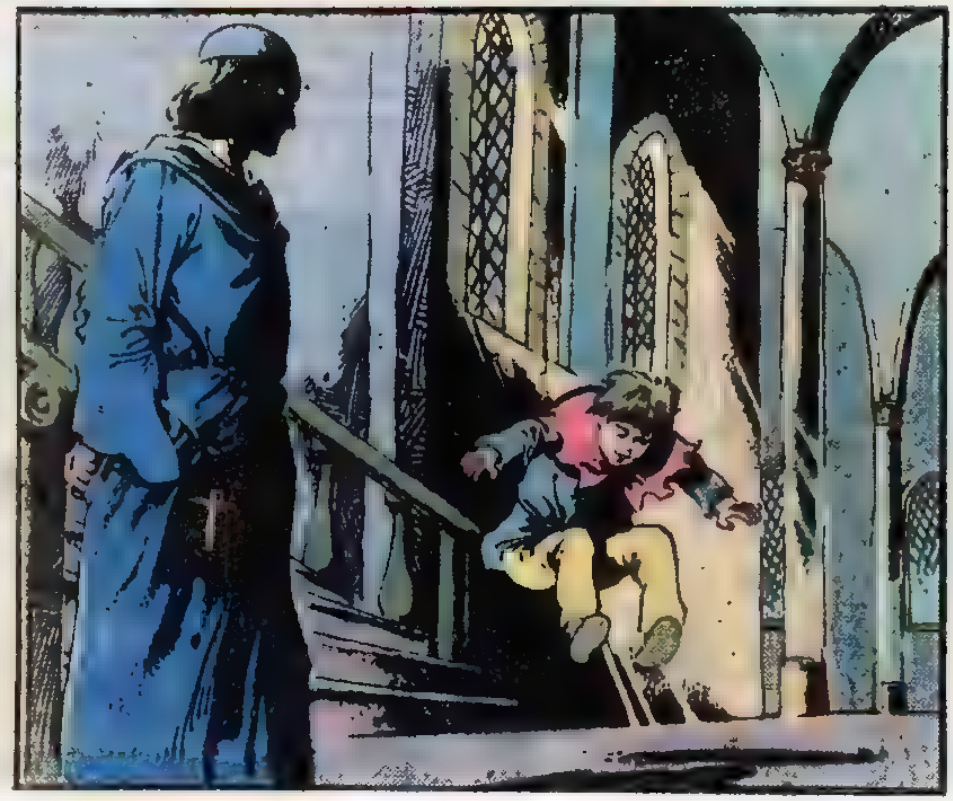


Sixteen years earlier, on a day called Quasimodo Sunday, a little creature was laid in the wooden bed on the porch of the church of Notre Dame, where it was a custom to leave orphans and unwanted children in the hope that someone would come along to take care of them.

A young priest had been listening to their talk. Now he came forward and held out his hand over the poor child.

His heart melted with pity; he took the child in his arms and carried him away.

At that time, Frollo was a priest of Notre Dame. It was there that he baptized this child, who was soon twisting and hopping under the arches of the church.



Notre Dame was his home, his country, his world. He knew and loved every inch of it.

The statues, both saints and monsters, were his friends.

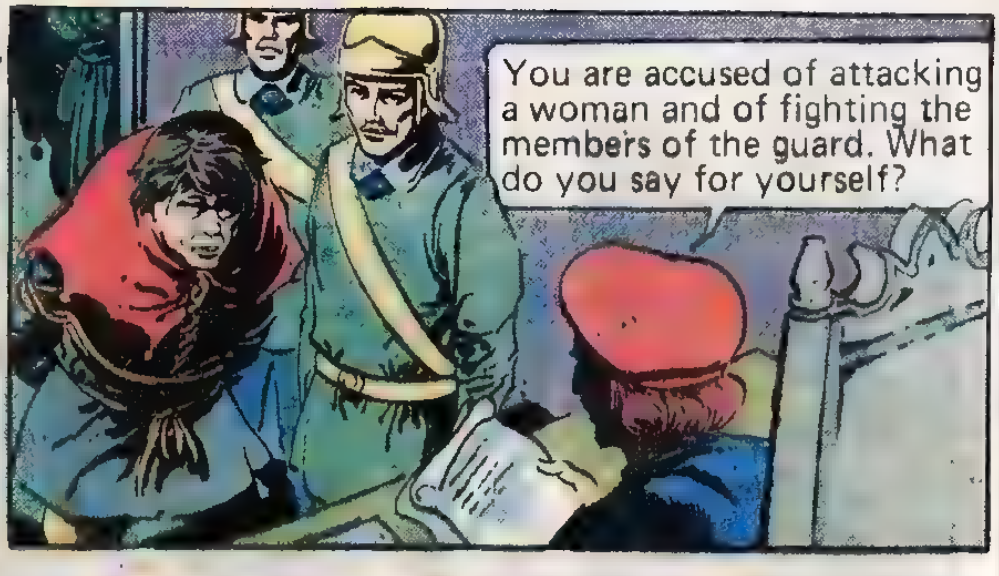
He climbed its towers like something between monkey and mountain goat.

Most of all he loved the bells, even though they had made him deaf.

The one human being whom Quasimodo loved, as much or even more than his cathedral, was Claude Frollo—who had raised him, protected him, taught him, and made him bell ringer.

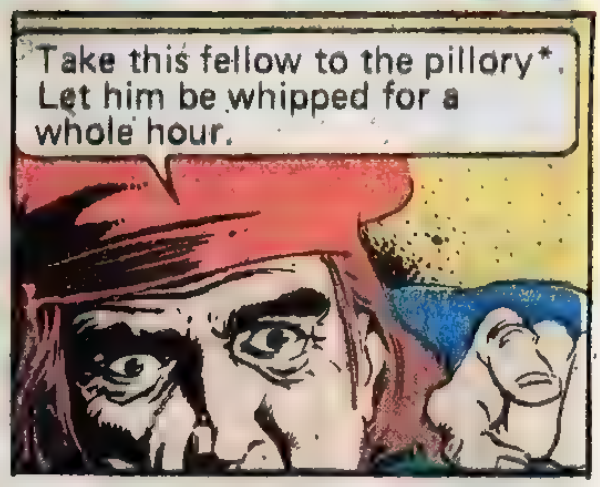
Although Quasimodo loved him, Frollo was feared by the other boys around the church.

Now let's return to our story. The day after the Festival of Fools, Quasimodo was brought into court.



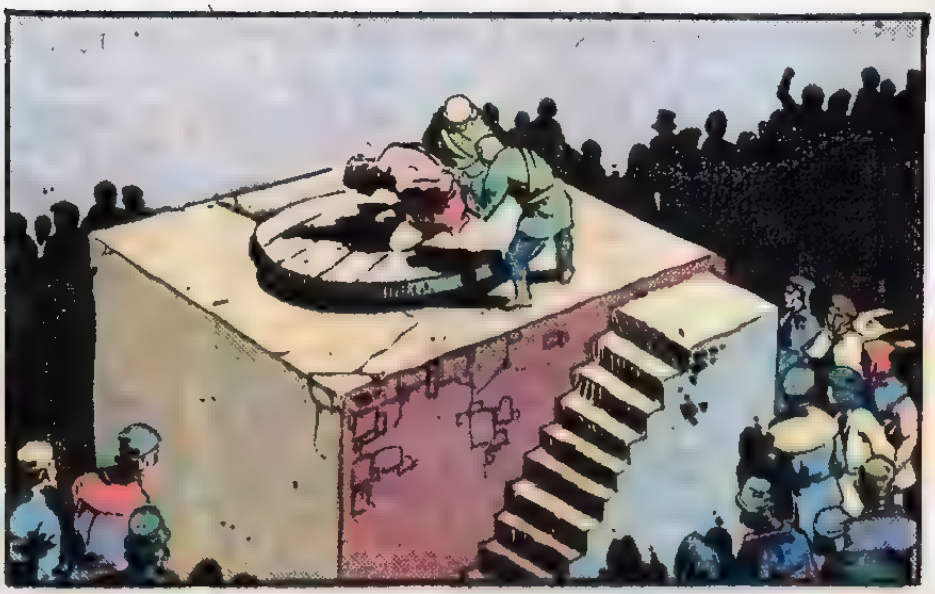
The deaf prisoner thought that the judge was asking his name.

Quasimodo thought the judge had asked his profession.



* a public place where a person might be punished for a minor crime

In the Place, where the day before Quasimodo had been cheered as the Pope of Fools, he was now tied on the wheel of the pillory.



As the crowd laughed and cheered, a man climbed the steps to the platform, carrying a whip of long, white tails.

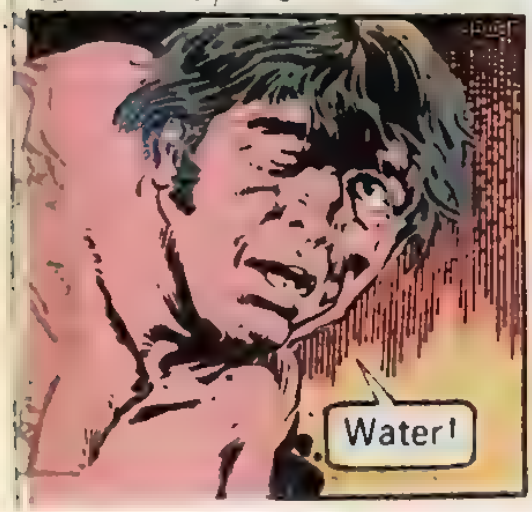
He placed an hourglass on a corner of the pillory. With each turn of the wheel, the whip rose and fell, until the sands had run out, and the hour had passed.

Then the wheel stopped. He still had to remain on the pillory an hour. He opened his eye and glared at the crowd that laughed and threw stones.

At last, breaking his silence, he cried out in a broken voice.

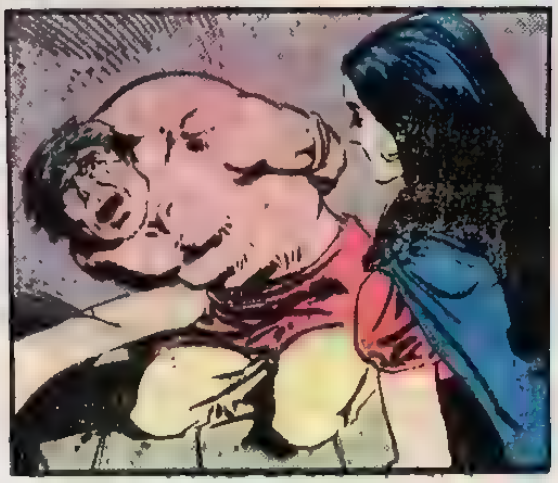
His cry for help only made the crowd laugh louder.

Again Quasimodo called; again they laughed more.

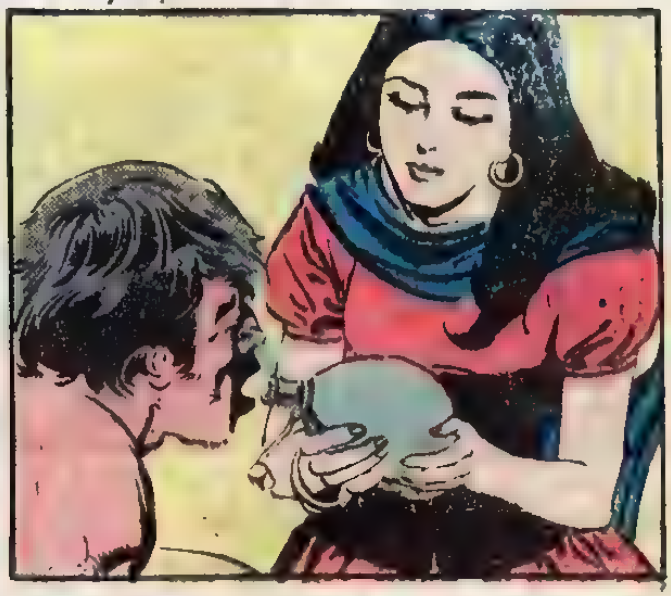


Then the crowd let a young girl pass who came near the pillory.

It was the gypsy girl he had tried to carry off! Thinking she had come to hurt him he shrank away.

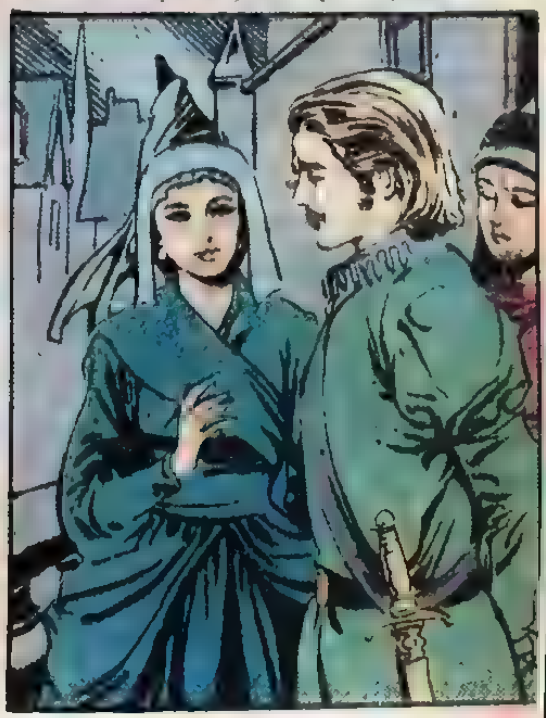


Instead she gently lifted a cup to his dry lips.



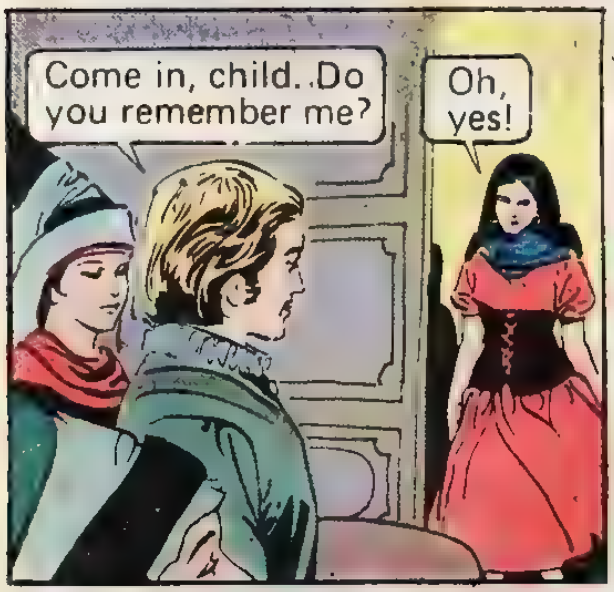
A big tear trickled down his face. He drank greedily. The crowd cheered as Esmeralda came down from the pillory.

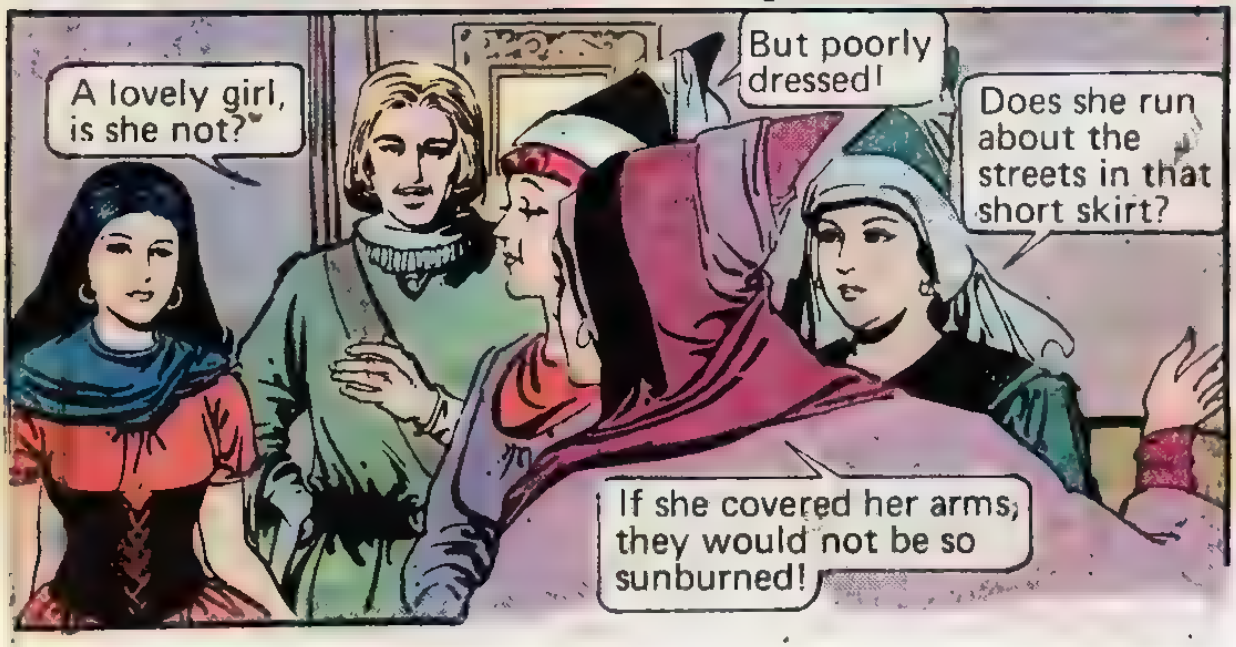
The time of his whipping having passed, Quasimodo was set free. Two months passed. At a house across from Notre Dame Cathedral, a group of rich young ladies was gathered, together with a handsome young Captain.



What a pretty little gypsy dancing in the square! Is she the one you saved from robbers?
Yes, I know her by her goat.
Do call her up here! She will make us laugh.

Phoebus called to Esmeralda. Shyly she made her way into the house.




A lovely girl, is she not?
But poorly dressed!
Does she run about the streets in that short skirt?
If she covered her arms, they would not be so sunburned!

So Esmeralda left. After a few moments' thought, Captain Phoebus followed her.

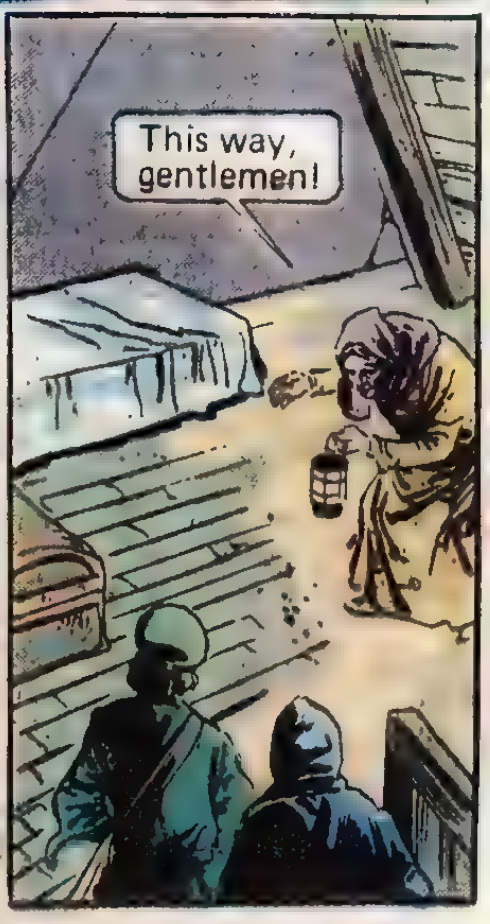
Several evenings later at nightfall, Phoebus and a friend left the tavern where they had been drinking together.

Walking on alone, Phoebus saw a moving shadow behind.

The figure came up and grabbed Phoebus' arm.

I will give you money if you hide me in some corner where I may see if the girl is really the one you named.
Thanks! It will make no difference to me!

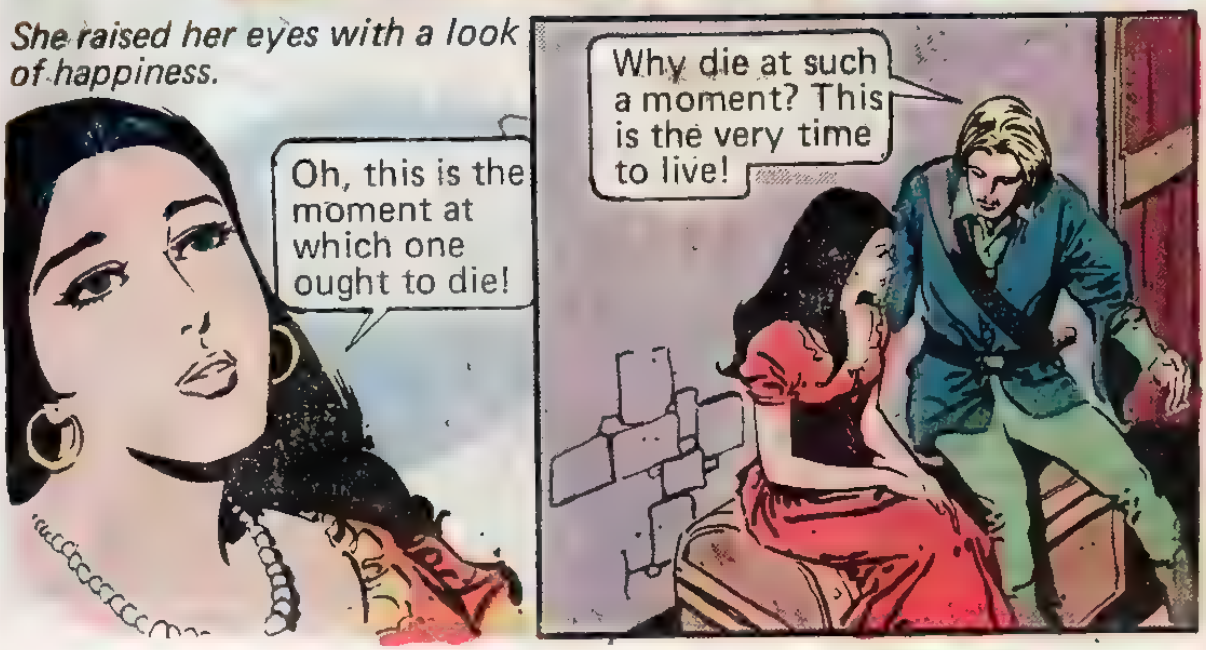
They went to a house where an old woman opened the door; then showed them upstairs to an attic room.



Claude Frollo—for he was the man in the hood—entered, and hid in the dust. His brain seemed on fire.

A few minutes later, a beautiful and graceful Esmeralda came in.

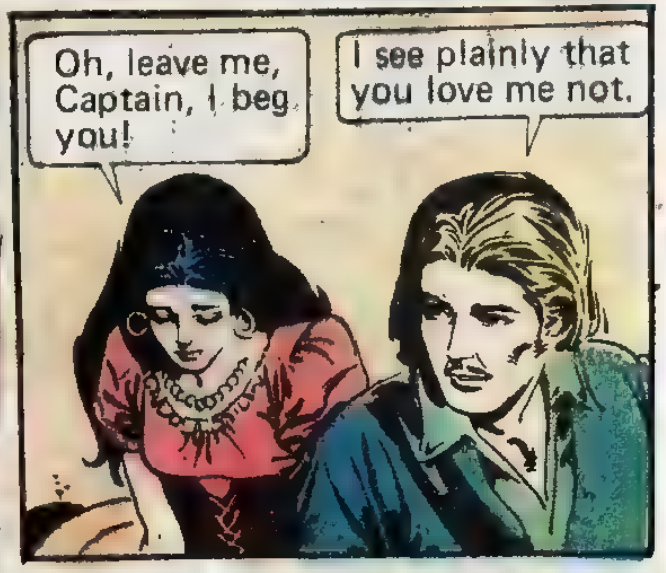
She raised her eyes with a look of happiness.

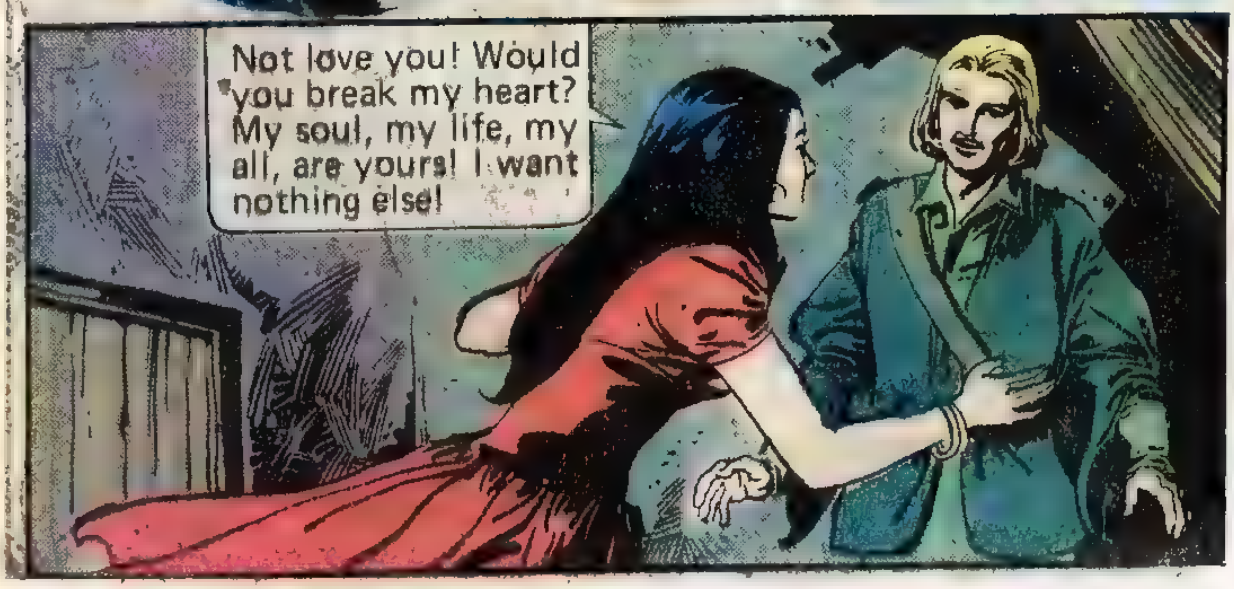


Phoebus, teach me your religion so that we may be married.
Marry? A silly idea! Do people love one another more for a few words spoken by a priest?

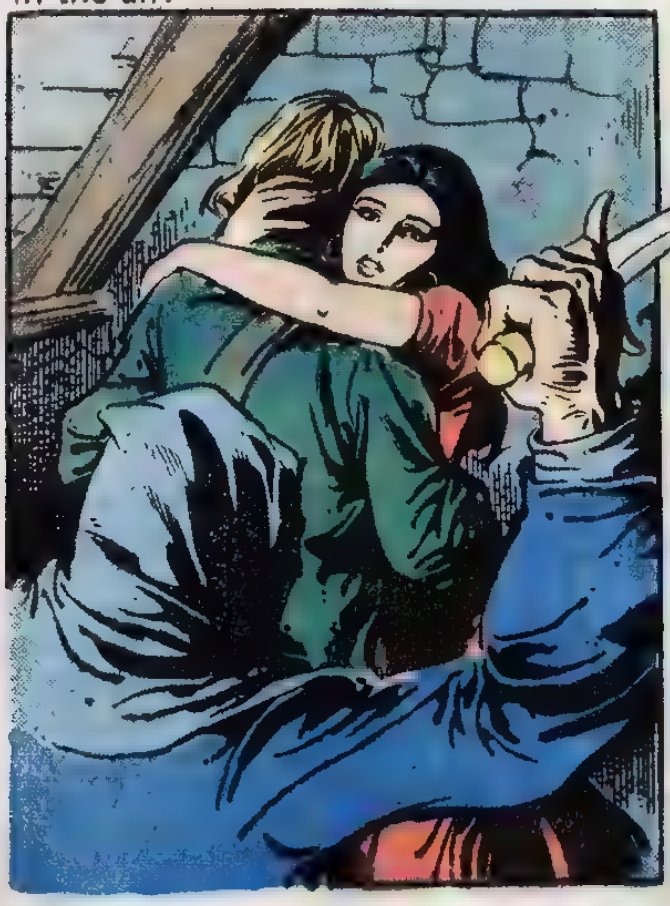
The priest's face against the door was like a tiger looking out of its cage. His eyes flashed.

The gypsy's head hung sorrowfully.





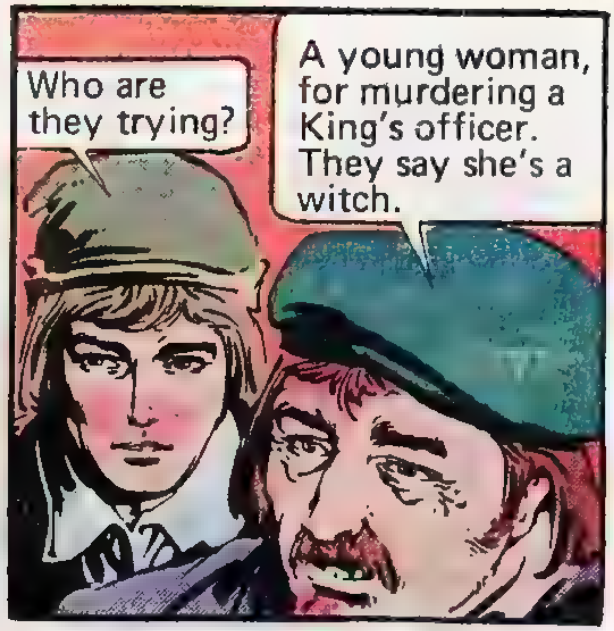
Phoebus took her into his arms. All at once she saw above the Captain's head, another face—angry, twisted with hate and a hand holding a knife in the air.



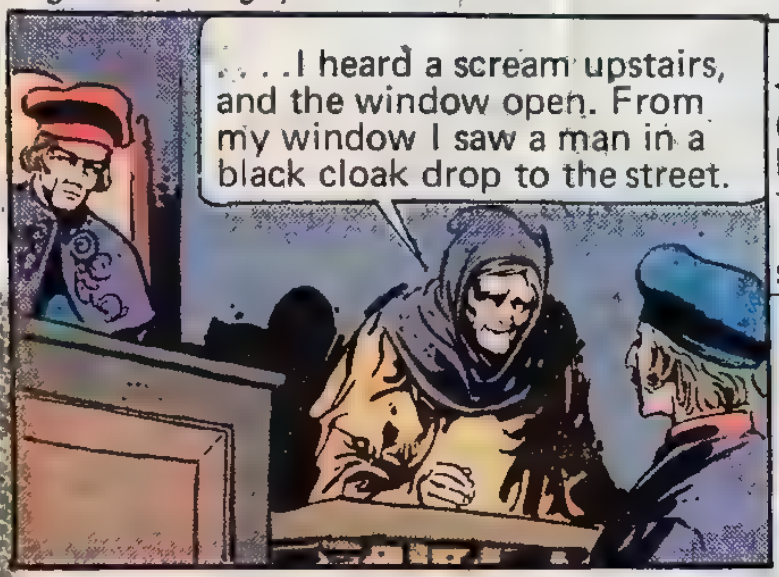
Scared to death, she saw the knife come down and rise again. She fainted.

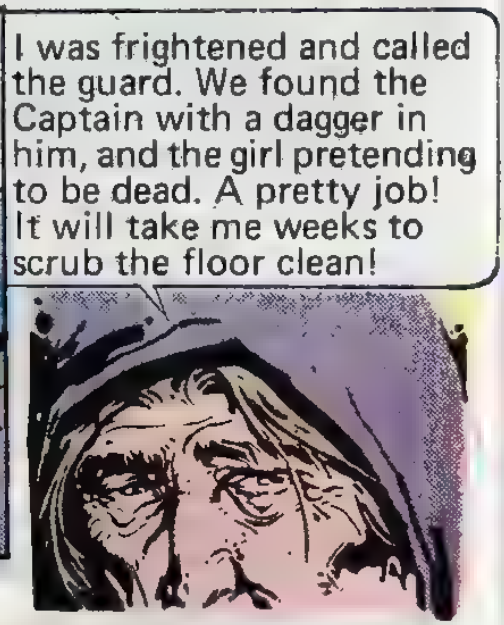
Coming to, she found herself with soldiers all around. The priest was gone.

A month passed. Gringoire and the gypsies were very worried about La Esmeralda, who had not returned. One day Gringoire followed a crowd into the Palace of Justice.



An old woman who looked like a bag of rags was being questioned.

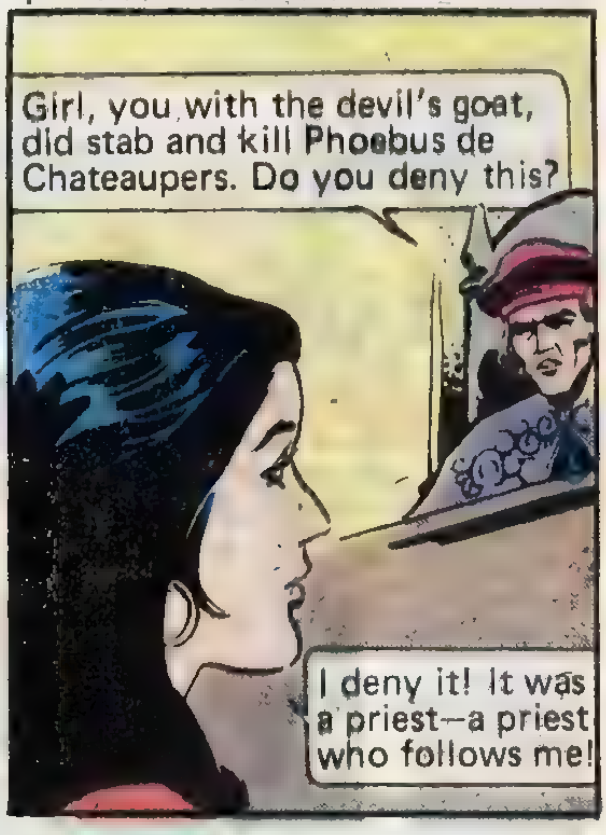



I was frightened and called the guard. We found the Captain with a dagger in him, and the girl pretending to be dead. A pretty job! It will take me weeks to scrub the floor clean!

Suddenly, to his horror, Gringoire saw La Esmeralda was the girl who was on trial.

In those days it was common to find animals guilty of witchcraft. Djali was made to perform his tricks.

The president of the court then spoke to La Esmeralda.

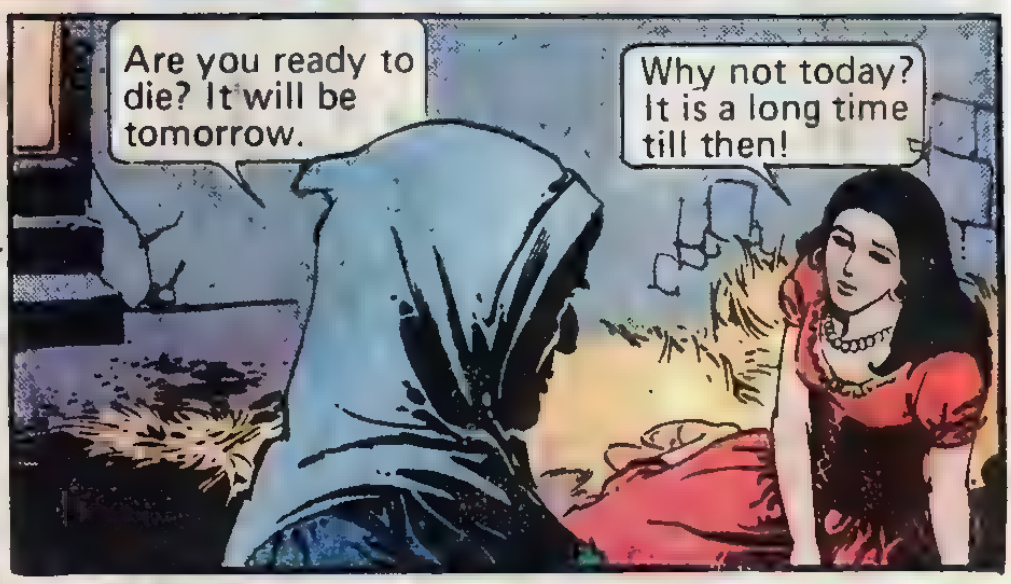

Girl, you with the devil's goat, did stab and kill Phoebus de Chateaupers. Do you deny this?
I deny it! It was a priest—a priest who follows me!

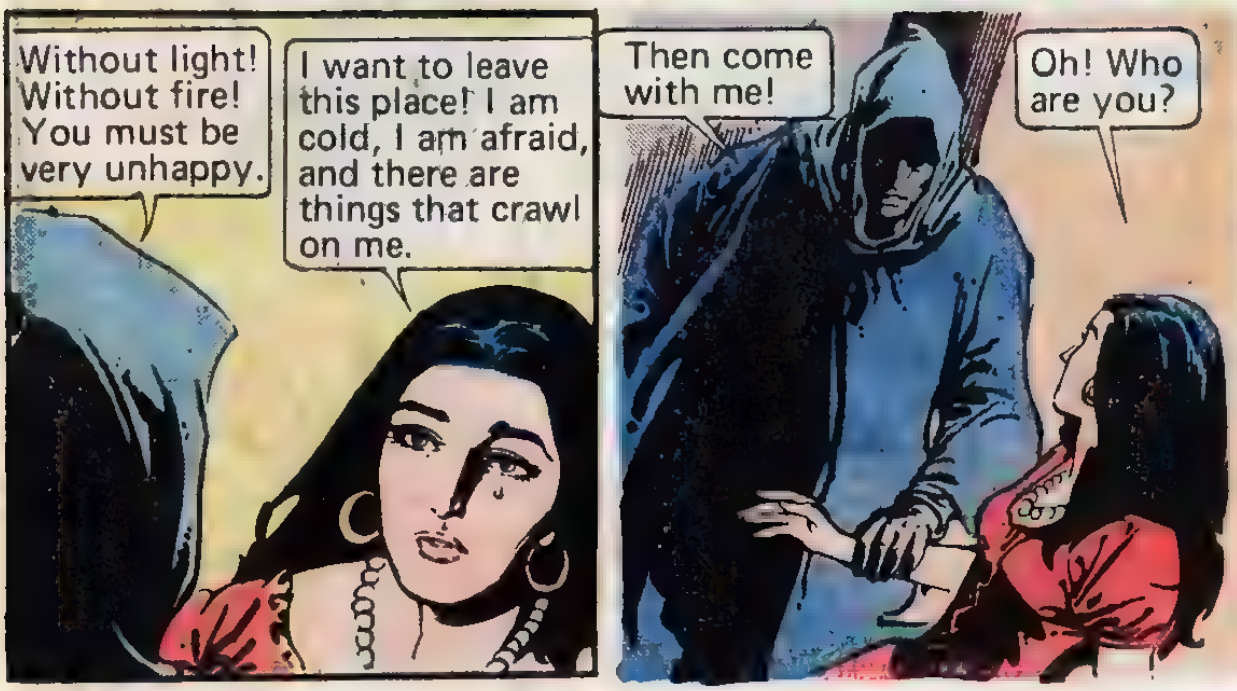
Esmeralda was tortured until she confessed.

She heard a chilling voice pronouce the words.

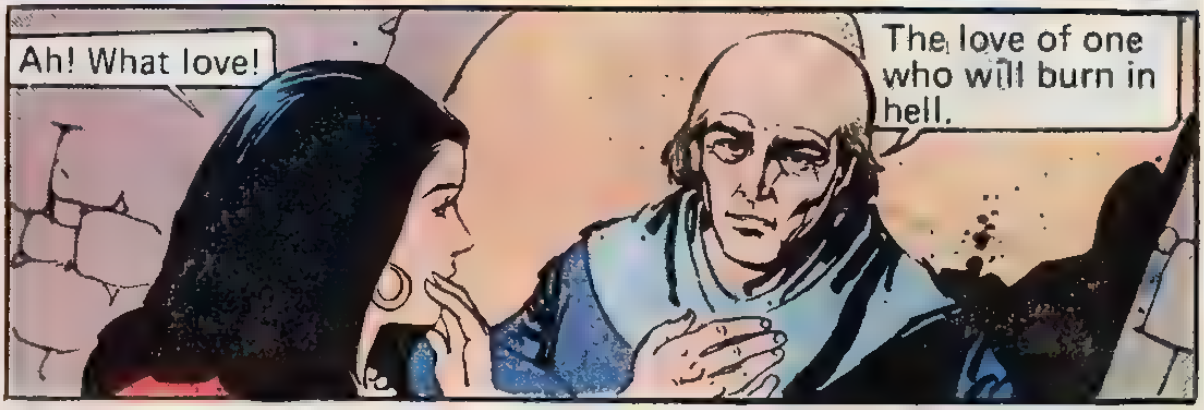
You shall be drawn in a cart, barefoot, to the Church of Notre Dame, and there confess your sins to a priest; then taken to the Place de Greve and hanged; and your goat likewise.

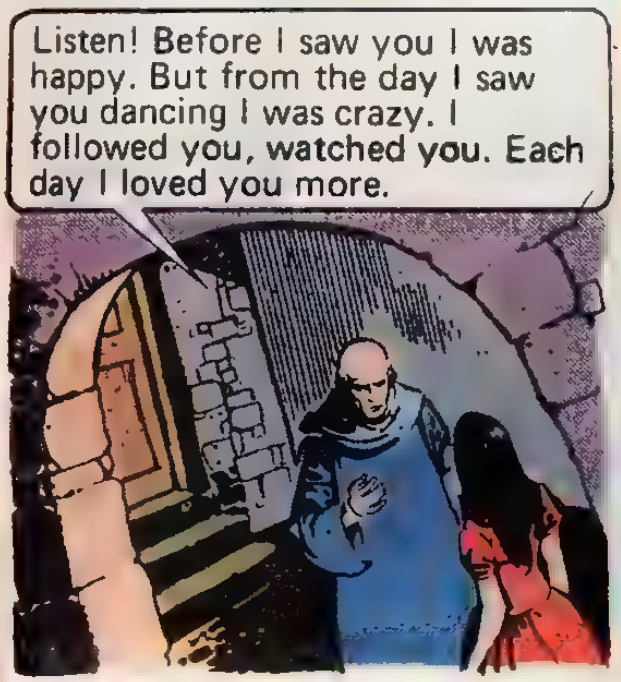
She was thrown into a dark cell where she stayed in a daze. One day the door creaked on its hinges and a man dressed in black entered.




Without light! Without fire! You must be very unhappy.
I want to leave this place! I am cold, I am afraid, and there are things that crawl on me.
Then come with me!
Oh! Who are you?

The man pushed back his hood. It was the priest whose face had followed her for so long! She covered her eyes.



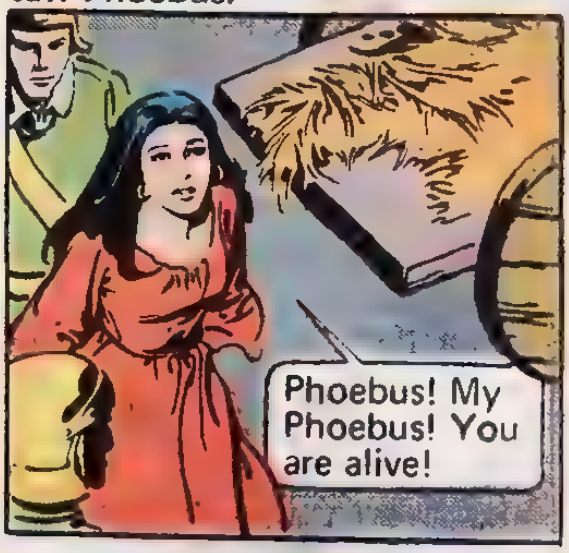

Listen! Before I saw you I was happy. But from the day I saw you dancing I was crazy. I followed you, watched you. Each day I loved you more.

Oh, my Phoebus!
Not that name! Girl, have pity on me! You do not know what unhappiness is! To love a woman—be a priest—to be hated—to see her waste her love on a silly fool!
We could still be happy! I could help you escape. We could find sunshine, blue sky. ...oh, save yourself! Help me!
What has happened to Phoebus?
He is dead.
Get away, monster! Murderer! Leave me to die! Nothing shall bring us together, not even hell itself!

Silently, slowly, Claude Frollo began to climb the stairs. His face was horrible. Esmeralda fell with her face to the ground.

Phoebus, meanwhile, was not dead. Though badly wounded, he had recovered. He felt that he had been caught in the spell of witchcraft, had been made to look foolish, and was eager to forget the whole business. One fine morning, two months after the stabbing, he came again to call upon the lady who lived opposite Notre Dame.

They watched the girl. Suddenly Esmeralda raised her eyes and saw Phoebus.



Phoebus and the lady quickly went inside, and the window was closed. For Esmeralda, this last shock was too much. She fell to the ground, senseless.

No one had noticed a watcher in the gallery of the church, just above. Suddenly he seized a rope tied to a pillar and glided down.

He struck to the ground the men who held La Esmeralda and carried her off on one arm.

With one bound he was in the church, holding her over his head.

Within the walls of Notre Dame, the prisoner was safe. It was a place of safety. No one could enter and take her away.

Quasimodo held her gently. His eye shed a flood of tenderness upon her. At that moment he was beautiful.

* protection from punishment or the law which was granted to anyone who was inside a church

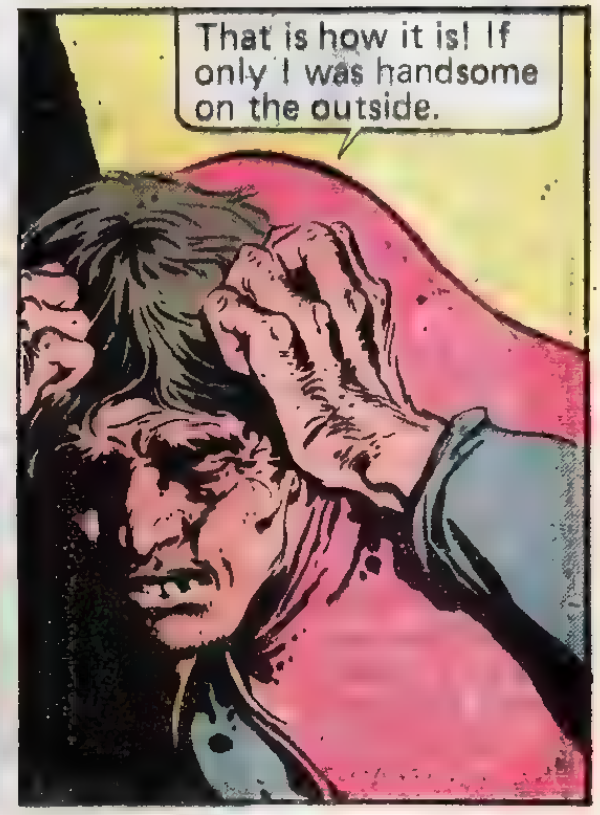
Stay here during the day. At night you can walk about the church, but do not step out of it, or they will catch and kill you—and it will be the death of me!

The next morning Quasimodo came again. She spoke and he read her lips.

Why have you saved me?
You have forgotten a man who tried, one night, to carry you off —a man to whom, the next day, you gave water on the pillory! You have forgotten, but he has not.

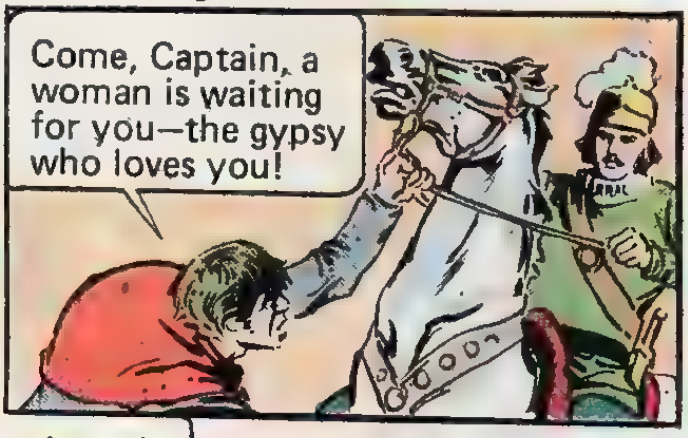
Time passed. Hope filled the girl. Then one day on the roof, she saw Phoebus riding below.

Phoebus was too far off to hear the call, but the deaf bell ringer understood it.



Forcing back tears, he turned to the girl.

He hurried down the stairs, but Phoebus had entered the house opposite. Quasimodo waited all day and until late at night before the Captain appeared again.



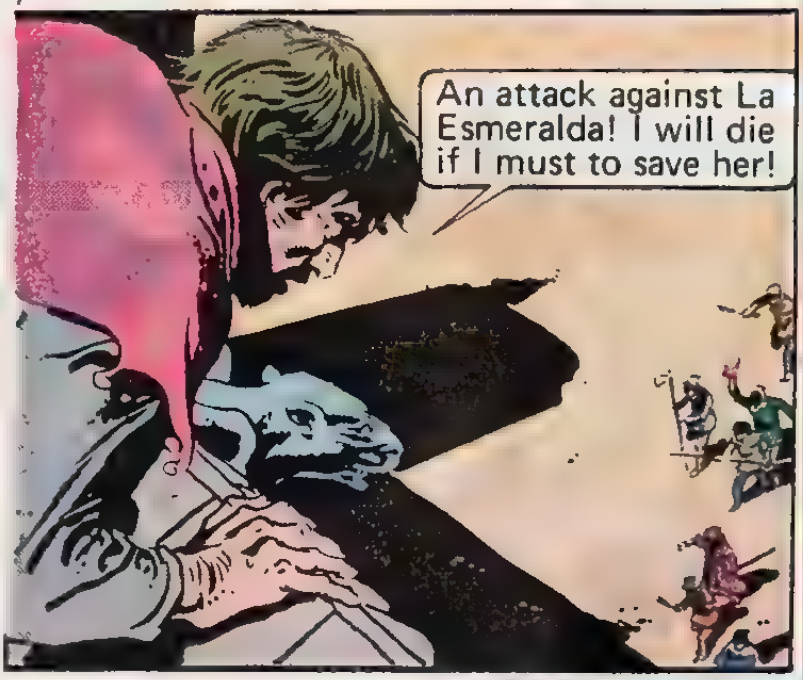
Quasimodo returned to Esmeralda. He could not bear to tell her the truth.

Dom Frollo, having heard how Esmeralda had been saved, had shut himself into his cell. For weeks he saw no one. He was terribly upset. At last he went out and found Pierre Gringoire.

What has happened to the gypsy who saved your life?
I'm not sure. I was told that she was safe in Notre Dame.
I can tell you more. The court has passed a special law. In three days' time they will enter the church and seize her.
Then she will be hanged. Will you do something to save her?
Yes, if I do not get hanged myself.
I have it! I will tell the beggars and thieves. She is their favorite. If they attack the church, we can carry her off in the confusion!
Good! We'll do it tomorrow.

The next night, Quasimodo could not sleep. He was uneasy. He locked the great iron bars that closed the church doors. Then he went to the top of the north tower and looked out into the darkness over Paris, keeping guard like a good dog, with a heart full of fear. Suddenly he saw movement below—people—a crowd—pouring into the street before the church.

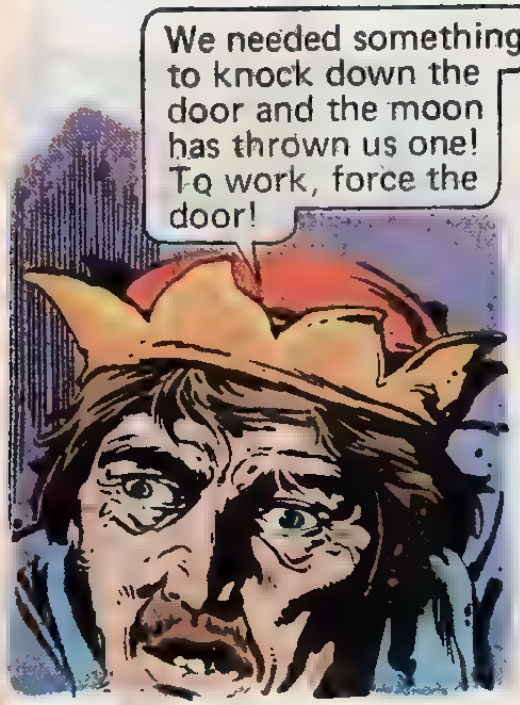
Then torches were lighted. He could see men and women armed with clubs, sticks, and pickaxes.



Thirty strong men carrying sledgehammers and crowbars made for the great door of the church.

Suddenly with a terrible crash, a great beam fell from the sky, crushing a dozen men!

The crowd ran in every direction, staring up at the sky.

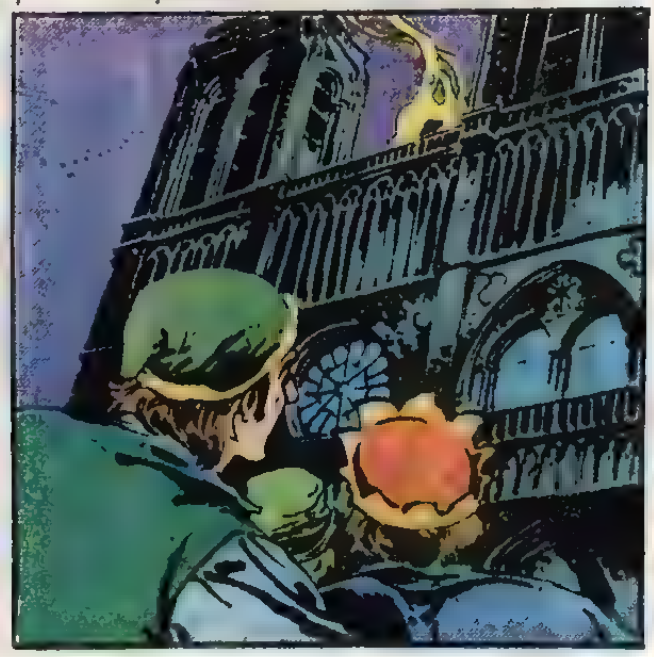


The men picked up the beam and smashed it against the great door.

A shower of stones began to rain down on the attackers.

Two streams of molten lead fell in a deadly shower.*

All eyes were raised. Near the top of the building a flame lighted the statues of devils and dragons—and among the monsters was one that moved from place to place.



* hot, melted

The brave hunchback had been lucky. Workmen on the roof had left piles of stones, rolls of lead, great beams with which he had fought the attackers. But now they tried a new method.

A ladder was raised against the church wall and they began to climb.

But before they could set foot on the roof, Quasimodo caught hold of the ladder and pushed it from the wall with superhuman force.

But more ladders were found. Soon Quasimodo saw attackers climbing on all sides. He had no way of holding off all these men with angry faces.

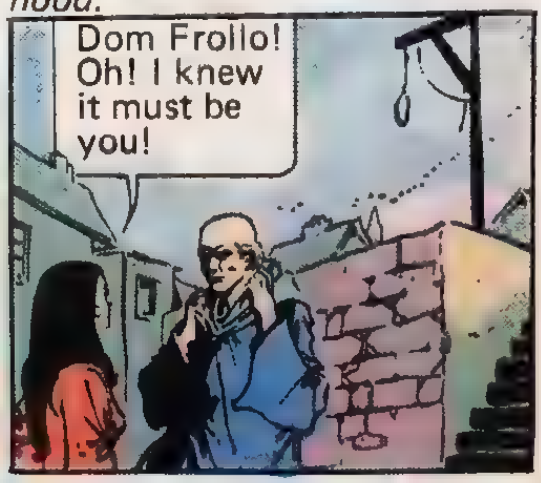
During the attack Esmeralda had stayed in her room, fearful and praying. Then she heard a footstep.

They went down through the church and out to the rear of the cathedral. At the river's edge, a rowboat was waiting.

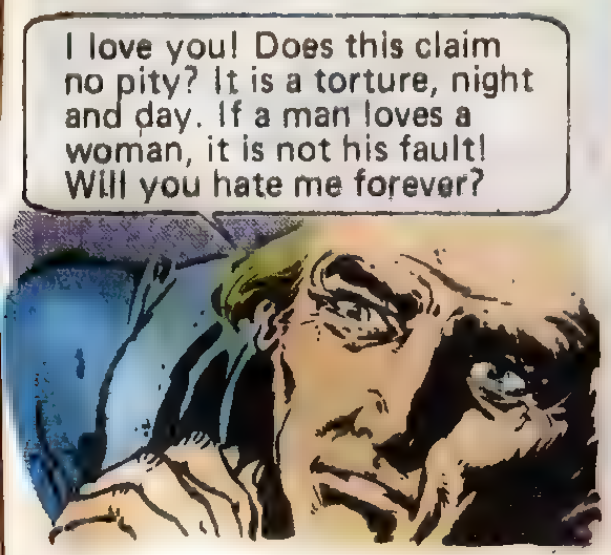
Slowly they crossed the river. The girl watched the unknown man with secret terror.

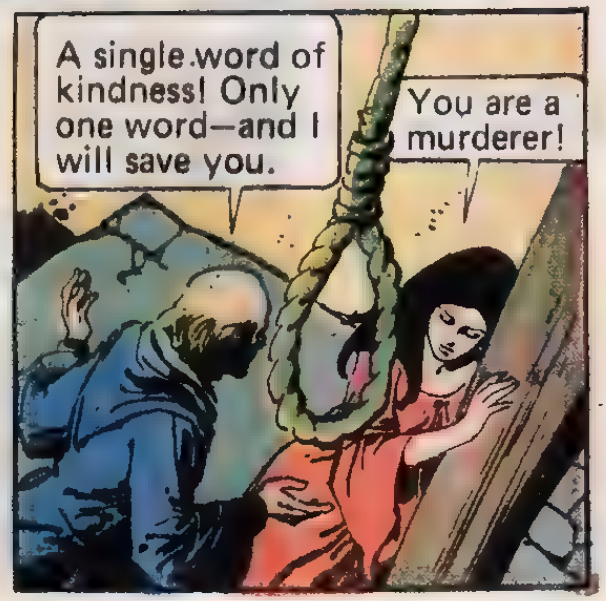
They reached the shore. Esmeralda stood for a moment frozen with fear. Then she realized that Gringoire and the goat had disappeared and she was alone with the unknown man.

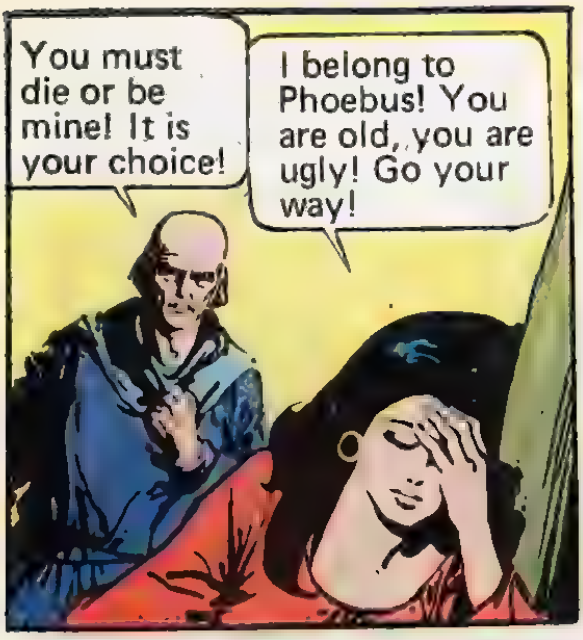
They reached the Place de Greve. In the middle of it stood the gallows. The man raised his hood.



Listen to me! They are looking for you to hang you. I love you and can save you. There is the gallows. Choose between us!
I feel less horror of that than of you!


I love you! Does this claim no pity? It is a torture, night and day. If a man loves a woman, it is not his fault! Will you hate me forever?





There was the sound of weapons and the tramp of horses as the soldiers came.

The hangman slipped the cord about the lovely neck of the girl. He then lifted her on his shoulder and began to climb the ladder.

As daylight returned to Paris, Dom Frollo returned to the church and climbed to the tower overlooking the Place de Greve. Quasimodo followed behind him to see what he was looking at.

He saw La Esmeralda carried to the gallows, and the hangman kick away the ladder. And a terrible laugh burst from Claude Frollo.

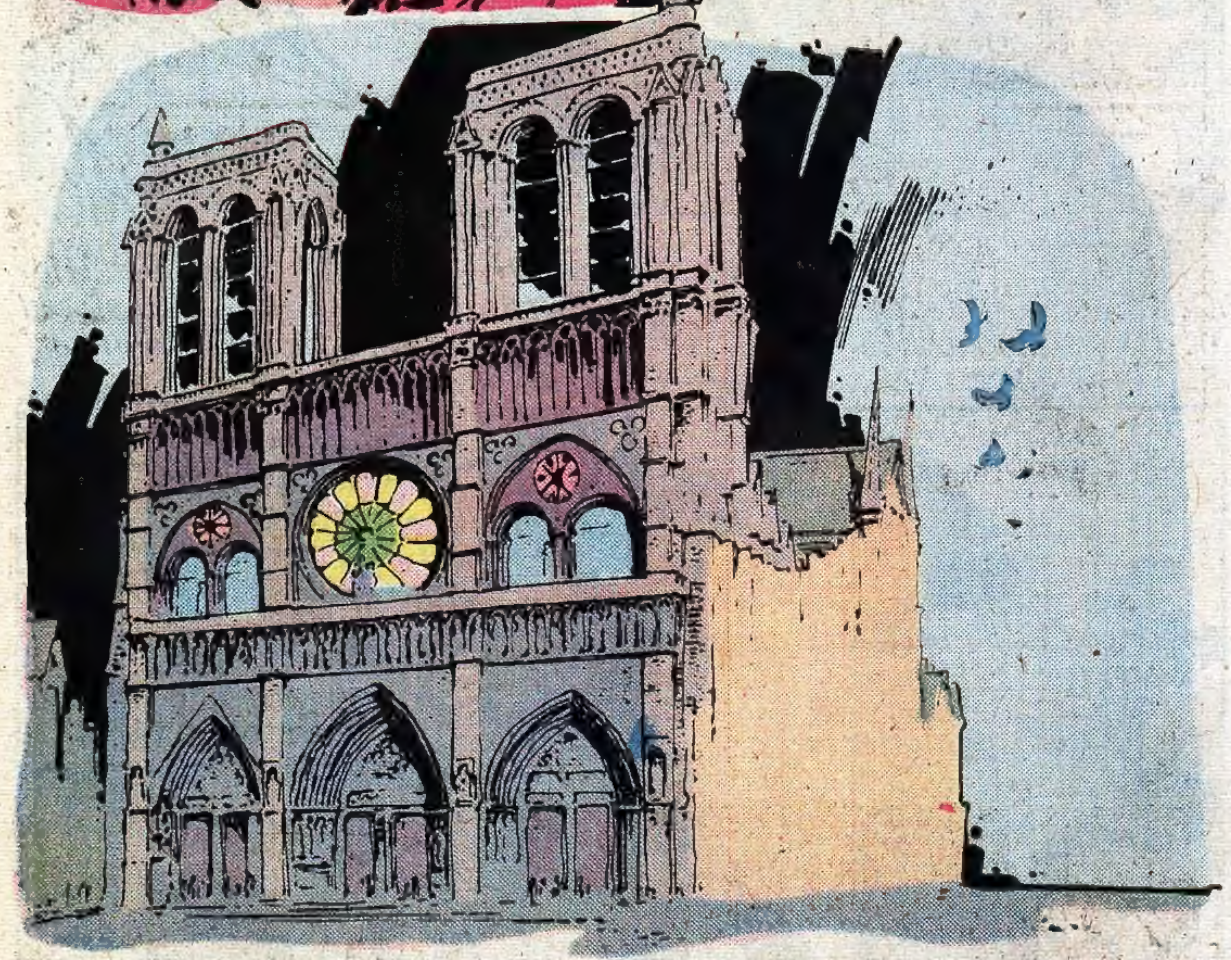
Quasimodo rushed upon him and pushed him into space.

The gutter beneath caught him. He clung to it. Quasimodo did not even look at him.

His fingers slipped. He lost his hold. He closed his eyes and down he fell.

Quasimodo wept. In the square below, the body of the gypsy was joined by the body of the Archdeacon.

Quasimodo was never seen again. Some two years later, in the tomb where those who had been executed were buried, two skeletons were found. One was a woman and the other, holding her, was a man. His spine was crooked, his head pushed between his shoulders. He had not been hanged. Rather it seemed that he had come there and died.



But Quasimodo had been the soul of Notre Dame. To those who knew he had once existed, Notre Dame appeared empty, dead. The spirit had gone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Victor Hugo, a French poet and novelist, was born in 1802. His life can be divided into seven periods: his Napoleonic childhood, his infant-prodigy period in Paris, his royalist period, the three turbulent years of the romantic crusade, the fifteen successful years under Louis Philippe, his political period, and his eighteen years of exile. Hugo attended the Pension Cordier for three years while simultaneously studying at Louis-le-Grand. This was the only formal education he received.

Hugo's ambition to become a writer began at the age of fourteen. From then on he wrote verses, odes, satires, acrostics, riddles, epics, and madrigals. At the age of twenty-two he published his first volume of poetry.

During his fifteen years of success he published *The Hunchback of Notre Dame.* With this work he acquired great popularity among all classes and is considered one of the greatest writers in French literature.

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